



Staff Report

DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION FOR THE BELMONT CITY POEM

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

The Mayor proposed that Jim McLaughlin's "Belmont" Poem from 1962 be adopted as the official Belmont City Poem. During the Council meeting of August 9, 2005, Council made a motion for adoption. During the Council meeting of September 13, 2005, Council officially adopted the resolution. Council decided to have the poem designed with hand-calligraphy, and instructed the City Manager's office to research options for spending \$2,000. Council wants the poem to be highlighted as part of the grand opening of City Hall.

Background

In 1962, Jim McLaughlin wrote the poem titled "Belmont" and it was published in a book titled "Poetry of the Golden State." "The poem captures the soul rather than the body of the City," said Mayor Warden. It was written 43 years ago and still represents the City, according to Warden.

Discussion

During the City Council meeting of August 9, 2005, Council agreed that the poem should be designed using hand-calligraphy, and displayed at City Hall. Staff has talked with Mr. McLaughlin, and he has expressed that he would like the poem large enough to make it easy for people to read.

Staff has researched options and is recommending Ms. Ann Miller design, calligraphy and professionally frame the Belmont poem, and that it be hung in the lobby of Belmont City Hall. Council discussed options at the September 13, 2005 Council meeting, and directed staff to come back to Council with options for spending \$2,000 on the project.

Options

Option A

Budget of \$2,000.00 + tax and installation, includes the frame.

Wood frame for a 26 x 26 inch outer dimension: \$485 + tax maximum (frame has not been

selected, so we chose a simple square-cut light tan frame (2” deep with a .75” recessed face, giving the appearance of a shadowbox), with archival mat and regular glass.

Artwork would be 20x20” and would consist of a title in blue, the attribution, and 12 four-line stanzas written in simple upright script in black ink and arranged in two vertical columns separated by a blue vertical rule.

Option B

Budget of \$2,000.00 + tax, not including frame or installation.

Artwork is 20x20” and would consist of a title, the attribution, and 12 four-line stanzas written in simple upright script and arranged in two vertical columns separated by a blue vertical rule. In addition, the title would be larger, include several colors and illumination treatment, with the possibility of either of the following:

- 1) A small vignette in watercolor of a Belmont hill and tree closely associated with the large initial ‘B’ in Belmont, or
- 2) A more detailed titling style that includes drop shadow, hairlines and other illustrative treatments but without the pictorial element.

Option C

Option C would be the same 20x20” poems as described above, but with an alternate mounting plan described below.

Alternate mounting plan:

The artwork may be mounted between two 1/4-inch sheets of acrylic, with spacers to keep it off the wall, floaters for mounting the art, decorative caps for the drywall screws, and Jaylar permanent clear tape to seal the edges. This would entail some more research, but the acrylic sheets can be cut, bullnosed and drilled for approximately \$350. This figure does not include hardware or installation, which may require molly bolts. This option would not conflict with the framing of the Council and elected photos, and might highlight the “glass look” in the lobby and Council Chambers.

Fiscal Impact

The cost of the poem will be \$2,000 + tax and installation for option A; and \$2,000 + tax, framing and installation for option B. Option C would be similar, with a final pricing to be determined.

Recommendation

Staff seeks approval of one of the options above.

Alternatives

1. Deny any of the options and ask the City Manager’s office to return at a later date with modified options.

Attachments

Exhibit A. Sample of Option B with poem sketched and sample watercolor in the “B” of the title.

Exhibit B. Jim McLaughlin’s Belmont Poem

Respectfully submitted,

Joni Stallings
Administrative Assistant

Jack R. Crist
Interim City Manager

OPTION B

Belmont

James W. McLaughlin

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Am. Miller

Belmont
by
James W. McLaughlin

Beautiful Mountain! – Your name is so true!
Your slopes are so graceful from bay to the blue
where the stars are much lighter and moonlight much brighter
and all of the world seems to come into view.

Your valleys below are scenes you well know
and enjoy to extreme from atop your plateau
where Sugar Loaf rises to greet the sunrises
and where each time you look you see something new.

Out to the west is a vision of rest
where the mountains on lakes their reflections invest
and whose silhouettes hide the sun deep inside
after hues of soft colors have brightened your hills.

Then, looking out a bit to the north,
you view the Bay Bridge in its splendor set forth
to help frame your vision of beauteous precision
where God on the bay so depicted His skills.

Mountains, like yeast, rise up in the east
to encompass superbly your visional feast
of your view, quite astounding, of cities surrounding
the beautiful bay which reflects the sky blue.

Most wonderful sight of those cities is, nightly,
a necklace illumined and flickering brightly
of street lights and cars, like reflections of stars
that hover so quietly close above you.

Far from the hubbub, yet Peninsula's hub,
you stand as a redwood surrounded by shrub
and your streets formed by cow were all paved there somehow
so that progress not hinder your beauty at all.

Seldom does fog come, your hills to enshroud.
Even cottony clouds know that they're not allowed
for, though some nearly touch, they're off in a rush
and can only a moment of your beauty recall.

Your feet bear the strains of onrushing trains
which, during the night, sing your only refrains,
but your morning delight is a song ever bright –
the chirping of thousands of colorful birds.

Deer and quail by the fence, unprepared for defense,
are in no other city where homes are so dense
and your wildflowers grow amid poppies that glow –
until recent decades little known but to herds.

Since Sergeant Rivera and Father Palou
first crossed Devil's Canyon to get here to you,
you were first county seat and a traveler's treat;
then mansions and homes came to cover your range.

Throughout every year you have stood in revere
and no one can't love you who comes to live here.
For years – near 200 – your neighbors have wondered
how beautiful Belmont does thrive yet not change.